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HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONSULTING

Memorandum

Date	February 24, 2014
Project	Del Monte Warehouse
To	City of Alameda Historic Advisory Board
From	Christopher VerPlanck
Topic	Compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards
Copied	James Meek, Mike O'Hara, Paula Krugmeier, Susan McComb, William Duncanson
Via	Email

Members of the Historic Advisory Board:

I have prepared this memorandum in response to your request for my opinion on whether the proposed rehabilitation of the former Del Monte Warehouse in Alameda would comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The subject property was developed in 1927 for the California Packing Company – better-known today as the Del Monte Company. The former cannery/warehouse is currently in use as a general-purpose warehouse. The site consists of the historic brick and heavy timber-frame warehouse, as well as the later and non-contributing Pump House, Storage and Labeling Shed, and Mechanical Housing Unit. The Del Monte Warehouse is listed in the City of Alameda's Historic Preservation Inventory.

Methodology

I met with the project team twice at the offices of BAR Architects, first on January 14 and again on January 21, to review the proposed project, which would rehabilitate the 237,000 square-foot building for residential and commercial use. After the January 21 meeting, BAR Architects prepared four alternate schemes that varied the massing of the proposed addition. I reviewed these schemes and discussed them with BAR. The consensus was that Option Z1 was the best alternative because it would have least amount of physical and visual impacts on the historic building.

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Project Description
The rehabilitated Del Monte Warehouse would contain approximately 310 residential units, 11,500 sf of commercial space, and 300 parking spaces. The proposed project would make several modifications to the exterior of the building, including demolishing the non-historic 1950s-era Storage and Labeling Shed at the northwest corner of the site and "re-skinning" the outer two sections ("bays 1 and 4") of the roof to allow code-required light and air into the building. The center two sections of the roof ("bays 2 and 3"), as well as the wood-framing that supports it, would be removed to construct a new four-level-over-garage addition within the footprint of the building.

The exterior of the building would be preserved; the historic industrial windows at the second floor level would remain but the non-historic steel overhead doors in 62 existing openings at the first floor level would be replaced with metal window systems in keeping with the building's historic industrial character. In addition, the historic loading docks along the north and south sides of the building would be modified to create private patios for the first floor units. This change would result in the construction of steel and wood railings between units echoing the rhythm of the existing bays. Fifty new openings would also be punched along the first floor level to allow light and air into the building. However, the vast majority of the project program would occur within the interior volume of the existing building.

Analysis of the Project for Compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards
The first step in ascertaining whether a project complies with the Rehabilitation Standards is to determine if the project would retain the bulk of the property's "character-defining features." The period of significance is 1927, the year the building was completed. Changes that occurred after this date have not gained significance in their own right and need not be preserved, including the non-contributing Pump House, Storage and Labeling Shed, the Mechanical Housing Unit, and the low concrete wall south of the building. On the warehouse itself neither the solar panels on the roof nor the steel, overhead doors at the first floor level date from the period of significance and can therefore be removed.

The Del Monte Warehouse's significant character-defining features include its composition as a two-story, four-part, gable-roofed volume; its solid brick walls (50 bays each along the north and south façades and 12 each along the east and west façades) articulated by pilasters and spandrel panels made of a contrasting clinker brick with green tile inlay; its regularly spaced gable-roofed parapets (five each on the north and south façades and three each on the east and west façades); its shallow-pitched roof punctuated by monitors; its regularly spaced, punched door openings at the first floor level; its punched multi-lite steel industrial windows at the second floor level; its shed-roofed canopy and loading docks on the north and south façades; and its exposed timber framing inside the building.

The sections below present an evaluation of the proposed project for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Rehabilitation Standards). In addition to the National Park Service's *Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* (Rehabilitation Guidelines), I consulted the National Park Service's *Preservation Brief 14: "New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings:*

Preservation Concerns" for more detailed guidance. This evaluation is based on a set of architectural drawings and renderings prepared by BAR Architects in February 2014.

Rehabilitation Standard 1: A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.

Conversion from industrial to residential use is not inherently harmful to industrial buildings in the same way that the conversion of residential, commercial, or religious properties to other usages can be. Industrial buildings are by their nature adaptable structures often characterized by incremental alterations to accommodate evolving industrial technology or new uses. Many brick industrial buildings in the Bay Area have historic additions made of corrugated steel or other lightweight materials because brick is a comparatively expensive and permanent building material. There are many local examples of brick industrial buildings that have been successfully converted to residential and/or commercial use, particularly in Richmond, Oakland, and in San Francisco's South End, Potrero Hill, and the Mission District neighborhoods. Many have either one or two-story additions that are sometimes visible from public rights-of-way.

In conclusion, the proposed project appears to comply with Rehabilitation Standard 1.

Rehabilitation Standard 2: The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the property will be avoided.

The proposed project would make a limited number of changes to the brick exterior of the Del Monte Warehouse, including replacing non-historic metal doors with storefronts and glazing systems required for residential and commercial usage and creating 50 new openings for the residential and commercial units. New steel and wood railings would be added to the loading docks to create private patios along the north and south façades. Otherwise, the exterior of the building would be retained and preserved to maintain its historic industrial character. The modifications to the first floor level, including the creation of new window and storefront openings, as well as the wood and metal railings on the loading docks, are essential for the proposed new use. They are, however, small-scale and easily reversible changes that would not disrupt the historic industrial character of the building.

Within the interior, portions of the interior framing would be removed to construct the proposed four-level-over-garage addition within the footprint of the historic building. The Rehabilitation Guidelines recommend against "removing, covering, or radically changing features of structural systems which are important in defining overall historic character."[1] On the other hand, San Francisco, which uses the Rehabilitation Standards for reviewing alterations to historic properties, restricts the removal of a local landmark's existing internal structural framework or floorplates to 75 percent unless it is determined

[1] Anne E. Grimmer and Kay D. Weeks, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings"* (Washington, D.C.: 1997), 49.

that "such removal is the only feasible means to meet the standards for seismic load and forces."[2] Though this threshold is peculiar to San Francisco, it may be useful for determining the effect of removing interior fabric from the Del Monte Warehouse. An examination of BAR's conceptual level floorplans reveals that the proposed project would remove approximately 43 percent of the building's interior framing. New partition walls would be inserted within the interior but none of these would be visible from surrounding public spaces or rights-of-way. The interior brick firewalls would also be retained.

In regard to the character-defining features itemized above, the only ones that would be impacted by the project include less than 50 percent of the interior framing and less than 15 percent of the exterior brick work. Very little of the concrete loading docks would be removed.

In conclusion, the proposed project appears to comply with Rehabilitation Standard 2.

Rehabilitation Standard 3: Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historical properties, will not be undertaken.

The proposed project would not add any conjectural features or elements from other historical properties that would create a false sense of historical development.

In conclusion, the proposed project appears to comply with Rehabilitation Standard 3.

Rehabilitation Standard 4: Changes to a property that have acquired significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

None of the post-1927 alterations to the Del Monte Warehouse, including the metal overhead doors, the Storage and Labeling Shed, the solar collectors, or the low concrete wall south of the building have acquired significance in their own right. Their removal would not impair the integrity or the significance of the property.

In conclusion, the proposed project appears to comply with Rehabilitation Standard 4.

Rehabilitation Standard 5: Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

As mentioned previously, the proposed project would retain and preserve the exterior brick walls of the historic Del Monte Warehouse. The interior brick fire walls that separate the four bays would also be retained and preserved. The project would retain and repair the existing steel industrial windows and most of the structural and roof framing in bays 1 and 4. Approximately 43 percent of the rest of the framing and roof structure, mostly concentrated in bays 2 and 3, would be removed to construct the

[2] Section 1005(f)(4) of the San Francisco Planning Code.

addition. Though the removal of interior framing is not optimal from the perspective of the Rehabilitation Standards, it is necessary in order to make the project feasible and to complete the necessary seismic work. The removal of this fabric is in part mitigated by the retention and restoration of the majority of the brick exterior and because the affected areas of the internal framing are not visible from outside the building.

In conclusion, the proposed project appears to comply with Rehabilitation Standard 5.

Rehabilitation Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. When the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

The exterior brick walls of the Del Monte Warehouse, the most important features of the building, appear to be in good condition. The timber framing in the interior appears to be in fair condition, with some sections sandblasted and other sections requiring cleaning and seismic retrofitting. The steel industrial windows on the exterior of the building, as well as the monitor roof, appear to require moderate-to-extensive repairs. The steel sashes themselves would be retained and repaired. Where the severity of deterioration is too severe to be repaired, the steel sashes would be replaced using a metal counterpart that matches the original in regard to design, material, color, and molding profile. If any brickwork is damaged beyond repair the replacement brick would match the original in regard to color and texture.

In conclusion, the proposed project appears to comply with Rehabilitation Standard 6.

Rehabilitation Standard 7: Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

The exterior of the Del Monte Warehouse would need to be cleaned as part of the proposed project. No overly harsh or abrasive methods, such as sandblasting, would be used because such treatments can damage the exterior glazing of the brick, causing the softer interior to crumble. Instead, the brick would be pressure-washed using the lowest effective water pressure. If detergents are needed to clean accumulated soot and biological growth, gentle cleaning products, such as trisodium phosphates (TSP), would be used. Graffiti would be removed using the gentlest effective means possible, such as walnut shell blasting. Peeling paint would be removed with hand sanding, chemical strippers, or heat guns.

In conclusion, the proposed project appears to comply with Rehabilitation Standard 7.

Rehabilitation Standard 8: Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

Analysis of the presence of potential archaeological resources on the project site, if any, is beyond the scope of this memorandum. However, if archeological resources are discovered, standard mitigation measures typically required by the City of Alameda would assure compliance with Rehabilitation Standard 8.

In conclusion, the proposed project appears to comply with Rehabilitation Standard 8.

Rehabilitation Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property.

The following three areas of guidance in regard to rooftop additions are taken from the Preservation Brief 14: "New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings." [3]

- **Setbacks:** Preservation Brief 14 stipulates that vertical additions should be set back at least one structural bay from the exterior walls of a building. In the case of the proposed project, the addition would be set back 60' (approximately three bays) from the north and south façades and 250' (approximately 12.5 bays) from the east and west façades. In addition, it would occupy less than 33 percent of the overall floorplate.
- **Compatibility:** Preservation Brief 14 requires that a vertical addition should be distinguished from the historic building. In the case of the proposed project, the addition articulated as a pair of symmetrical blocks punctuated by a repetitive grid of rectangular window openings – much like the historic warehouse. It would also have a flat roof with low parapets. On the other hand, there would be no confusion over what is historic and what is new because the addition would be clad in contemporary materials, including metal and stucco.
- **Massing:** Preservation Brief 14 calls for a vertical addition to simple and unobtrusive and smaller than the historic building. In addition to having a much smaller footprint than the historic building, the proposed addition is designed to look even smaller by being broken up into an alternating arrangement of projecting volumes and landscaped interior courtyards. By doing this the addition recedes in areas, giving it the appearance of several smaller pavilions instead of a single large volume.
- **Height:** Preservation Brief 14 says that a rooftop addition should not be more than one story in height. Though the addition rises only one-story above the existing monitor roof, it rises almost two stories above the remainder of the building. However, because the addition is set back 60'

[3] Anne E. Grimmer and Kay D. Weeks, *Preservation Brief 14: "New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns"* (Washington, D.C.: 2010), 14.

back from the south and north façades and 250' from the east and west façades, its visibility is greatly minimized from most vantage points.

In conclusion, the proposed project appears to comply with Rehabilitation Standard 9.

Rehabilitation Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The addition and related new construction could be removed with some difficulty, including re-engineering portions of the historic building's structure that would bear on the new podium, but if removed the historic Del Monte Warehouse, including its two-story, gable-roofed massing, its brick exterior walls, and its ornamental detailing, would appear largely as it does today.

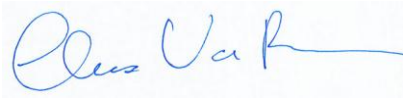
In conclusion, the proposed project appears to comply with Rehabilitation Standard 10.

Conclusion

The proposed project appears to comply with all ten Rehabilitation Standards. Though the project is ambitious in its scope, its potential physical impacts are mitigated by several factors. First, it is an industrial building, which in many ways makes it better-suited to additions and other alterations than other building types. Second, the visibility of the addition would be minimized by virtue of the existing building's sprawling footprint, which allows the addition to be set back 60' from the north and south façades and 250' from the east and west facades, rendering it invisible the east and west and minimizing its visibility from the north and south. Third, the project sponsor has decided to depress the addition into the ground by 5', making it rise only one-story above the existing building's monitor roof (and approximately one-and-a-half stories above the exterior walls), complying with the Rehabilitation Guidelines' restriction on the number of stories on lower, one or two-story buildings. Under CEQA, a project that complies with all ten Rehabilitation Standards is considered to have a less-than-significant impact on the environment.[4] It is my professional opinion that the proposed project would not alter in an adverse manner those characteristics that justify the property's eligibility for inclusion in the City's Historic Preservation Inventory.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Christopher VerPlanck

[4] CEQA Guidelines, Subsection 15064.5(b) (1).